

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ADE)
INNOVATIVE AND EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS DIVISION

ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS (ABOR)
HIGH HONORS TUITION SCHOLARSHIP “AIMS SCHOLARSHIP”

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who governs the High Honors Tuition Scholarship?

*The High Honors Tuition Scholarship is a **UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP**! The High Honors Tuition Scholarship is governed by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR). The Arizona Department of Education is **only** authorized to administer the program for the Arizona Board of Regents and to recommend to the universities students who qualify for the High Honors Scholarship.*

What is the statute reference for this program?

A.R.S. 15-1626.14 states the General Administrative Powers of the Board (ABOR) to develop and implement an Honors Endorsement Program for the purpose of recognizing Arizona high school students for outstanding academic achievement, demonstrated through test scores.

When did ABOR approve the Honors Tuition Scholarship?

At the August 2003 ABOR meeting, Superintendent Horne suggested a change in the criteria that emphasizes high academic achievement as demonstrated through class work and exceeding standards on the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards for High School (AIMS HS) assessments. At their April 2004 meeting, the ABOR voted to transfer the administration of the Regents Honors Tuition Scholarship Program to the ADE and approved the revised criteria.

In April of 2007, the ABOR approved revisions to the criteria that included AP/IB test scores to meet course competency as outlined in Part I of the criteria; acceptable weighted CORE GPA calculation; and a restriction on the number of times a student can use AIMS HS test scores to qualify for the scholarship.

In February of 2009, ABOR approved the inclusion of Arizona homeschooled students as being eligible to receive the scholarship.

Does a student need to be a citizen of the United States and/or Arizona Residency to qualify?

Yes, in order to qualify for the High Honors Tuition Scholarship, students must have Arizona residency with lawful immigration status as defined by the university admission office. Check with University Admission Offices for additional details.

Who will determine who qualifies for the tuition scholarship?

The high school from which a student graduates is responsible for determining whether or not a student qualifies for the High Honors Tuition Scholarship.*

What is the process for applying for this scholarship?

*There is not an "application" associated with this scholarship opportunity. Each high school is responsible for compiling a list of their students who meet the High Honors scholarship qualifications based upon completion of the 6th semester of high school (end of junior year.) High schools will provide this list to the Arizona Department of Education by October 15th of each year. Students will be notified by the Arizona Department of Education of their **conditional** qualification of the tuition scholarship. Additional certifications will be made by each high school June 15th, and July 30th. After completion of the 8th semester, high schools will verify whether or not the students have officially qualified for the tuition scholarship. If a student's final core GPA falls below the appropriate level or a student does not complete the required core courses with a B or better the scholarship offer **will** be withdrawn.*

Students who meet the core course and GPA requirements during their senior year course work or with AP/IB tests will still be eligible for the scholarship. ADE will notify students regarding their eligibility for the tuition scholarship and the universities will notify students regarding any change in scholarship award.

When will the High Honors Scholarship awards be determined?

High Schools will submit a preliminary list of qualified students to ADE by October 15th. ADE will compile a complete list of all high school submissions verify the information and send it to each of the universities by November 1st. Additional names of new eligible students will be sent to ADE by June 30th, and July 30th. The submission of Home School students will be the responsibility of the teacher of record and will follow the above timeline.

What is the value of the award?

*Value of the award is based on the cost of the student's first year tuition. The scholarship is renewable at the same **fixed value** for an additional 3 years (6 consecutive semesters) or until enough credits are awarded for a bachelors degree. This scholarship is transferable from university to university based upon **university-established** criteria. The actual dollar amount may vary from university to university. **Please contact the university financial/scholarship office to determine the policies or procedures for transferring the scholarship.***

Will all three state universities abide by the criteria and certification made by their high schools?

Yes, all of the three state universities have agreed to make the tuition scholarship awards based upon the criteria stipulated in the official language of the Arizona Board of Regents, with a few exceptions. 1) The High Honors Tuition Scholarship will not be awarded to a student who receives another university scholarships with a higher monetary value; 2) The student's citizenship or residency does not comply with in-state university requirements; 3) It is discovered that the student does not meet the academic requirements and was incorrectly certified by their high school.

Once the list is submitted to the universities, how are the awards handled?

*The universities will cross-reference the list with students admitted and subsequently registered for fall classes. Student accounts are adjusted accordingly. Tuition already paid by a student is credited back to the student's account. **Students do not need to provide independent verification of the award. Additional questions should be directed to the appropriate university financial aid office.***

How will students be notified that they have qualified for the scholarship?

The Arizona Department of Education encourages each high school to notify students of their inclusion on the list sent to the Department of Education. A certificate of congratulations will be sent on behalf of Superintendent Horne to the homes of qualified students. The universities will also notify the awardees once the tuition scholarship has been applied to the student's account.

Do students have to demonstrate financial need to qualify? Can they accept this scholarship in addition to other university scholarship offers?

*No. This is a **university** academic merit-based scholarship; therefore, students do not need to demonstrate financial need in order to qualify. However, all students are encouraged to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) regardless of their financial situation. Students who are offered other scholarships from the university may not receive this AIMS scholarship. Students automatically receive the higher scholarship offered from the university, but not both.*

What is the latest date that I can begin to use the award? Can the use of the scholarship be deferred?

The award is first available to qualified students beginning the first fall semester after a student graduates from high school and can be used no later than the first spring college semester following high school graduation or successful completion of high school course work. Deferments beyond the first spring semester are awarded at the discretion of each university financial aid office. Deferment policies vary for each university, please contact the universities financial aid office for additional information

Who will determine the qualifications for high school transfer students?

*Transfer students must meet the same criteria for the scholarship, including exceeding on the **AIMS HS** exams. Arizona private or home school students entering a public high school after the AIMS HS administration in the spring semester of their junior year may not qualify unless they have AIMS HS results from previous test administrations. Out-of-state students entering an Arizona public or private high must also exceed on the AIMS test by their junior year unless they transfer during their senior year. Out of state students who transfer to Arizona after the junior year spring administration of the AIMS HS test, will be allowed to take the AIMS HS test during their senior year. Other states' standardized exams **will not** substitute for the AIMS HS for purposes of qualifying for this scholarship.*

Is this the only in-state tuition scholarship assistance available to Arizona high school graduates?

***No**, other tuition assistance is available. Contact the financial aid scholarship office at the university you are interested in attending. Financial awards vary from university to university so they are your best resource for up-to-date information fitting your individual circumstances.*

How many times can a student retake the AIMS HS to “EXCEED” standards for the High Honors Tuition Scholarship?

*Students participate in AIMS HS testing for the first time in the spring of their sophomore year and can retest in the fall and spring of their junior and senior year. **In order to qualify for the High Honors Tuition Scholarship students must exceed on at least two sections of the AIMS HS test by the end of their junior year and have at least 2 AP exams with a score of 3 or better or 2 IB exams with a score of 4 or better by the end of their senior year.***

How can students in private schools or those being home schooled access this scholarship opportunity?

*This scholarship is available to **all** Arizona resident students who meet all of the criteria. Private and Home school students who would like to take the AIMS HS test can do so by contacting their local district or charter school. If a private school would like to administer the AIMS test to its students they must contact the Assessment and Testing office at 602-542-5031 or testing@azed.gov.*

How will you handle private or home schooled students who enter the public school during senior year?

In-state private or home schooled students must already have exceeded on at least two sections of the AIMS HS test by their junior year in order to be considered for this scholarship opportunity. It is up to the local school to determine placement into class rank, core course transfer grades and award credits. The ABOR and universities will accept the local school determinations.

How can small and rural school students qualify for the tuition scholarship when their schools do not offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses or the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program?

Advanced Placement tests are available for students through the College Board (www.collegeboard.com). Students can take an AP course as an Independent Study through the College Board. If a student chooses to pursue the AP course of study, they are advised to work with their high school counselors and administration.

How is the core GPA in Part 2 calculated?

*The Core GPA calculation must be calculated using the 16 core competency courses **exclusively**. ABOR has agreed to accept a student “testing out” of a core course if credit was given or if the student was subsequently enrolled in higher level core courses. However, if the grade is not reflected on the students’ high school transcript, the core GPA is calculated on less than 16 core classes.*

How do we determine whether to use a weighted or unweighted GPA to qualify for this scholarship?

It is at the discretion of the high school and/or student as to whether a weighted or unweighted GPA is used to qualify a student. A student does not need to meet the qualifications of both. A GPA calculation worksheet can be found on the ADE website www.azed.gov/asd/tuitionwaiver.

I have a B or better in all but one of my core classes. I received a C in the first semester of one of my core classes’ freshman year. Is it still possible to qualify for this scholarship?

Yes, If a student receives below a C in one or more core areas he/she has three options to remain eligible for Part I of the criteria: 1) Retake the course or courses and receive a B or better; 2) Take an additional core course in the deficient area(s) and receive a B or better; or 3) Take an AP or IB exam in the deficient core area and receive the acceptable score (see Table 1).

My son/daughter has tested out of one or more core courses. Is he/she still qualified for Part I of the tuition scholarship?

Yes, ABOR has agreed to accept a student “testing out” of a core course if credit was given or if the student was subsequently enrolled in higher level core courses. However, if the grade is not reflected on the students’ high school transcript, the core GPA is calculated on less than 16 core classes.

My daughter/son took a high school course in 8th grade for high school credit yet the grade received is not reflected on the high school transcript. Will that count as meeting Part I of the criteria?

Yes, if the student is subsequently enrolled in the next level core course, ABOR has agreed to accept core courses taken in junior high school for high school.

ABOR has also agreed to accept Cs received in core classes taken in 8th grade if the student was subsequently enrolled in a higher level course and receives Bs or better.

Testing out of a core high school course and receiving credit (or being enrolled in a subsequently higher level course) will also count towards meeting Part 1 of the scholarship criteria.

Does a student have to obtain a grade of B or better in each semester and/or quarter of a core course?

*Yes, a student must obtain a B or better in the unit in which **credit** is issued by the high school (i.e. quarter, semester). Grades are not averaged for Part I of the criteria. The only exceptions are those classes taken while in middle school.*

Students may take an AP or IB exam to prove core competency and fulfill the requirement for Part I of the scholarship criteria.

Does a B or better have to be earned in American/US History?

*Although American/US History is a core requirement for Arizona University Admissions and high school graduation, **ANY** two social science credits with a B or better can be used to qualify students for the High Honors Tuition Scholarship.*

Do the qualifying Foreign Language credits have to be in the same language?

Yes, the two credits of foreign language must be in the same foreign language.

Once I am awarded the scholarship who do I contact for questions?

Once you are awarded the scholarship, all questions regarding renewal, transferability, disbursement, and deferrals must be address **directly** to the financial aid office at the university in which you are transferring to or attending.

Who should I contact at the ADE for additional clarifications to my questions?

Students and parents should contact their high school counselor regarding questions of eligibility. If you have general questions regarding the tuition scholarship criteria, feel free to contact:

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